



ARC, Toshiba Team to Grow Configurable Processing

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(Electronic News) During a joint press conference Monday, Elstree, England-based ARC International and Toshiba Corp. announced that the two have entered a strategic collaboration meant to grow the worldwide semiconductor industry's adoption of configurable technology.

Under the terms of the agreement, Tokyo-based Toshiba has inked a multiyear license for ARC's ARChitect processor configurator, comprised of design tools and resources using a drag-and-drop graphical user interface (GUI).

The companies said they will also collaborate on development of a next-generation version of ARChitect that is tailored to Toshiba's Media embedded Processor (MeP), a proprietary configurable processor, so that a wider range of customers can use the platform. In 2005, Toshiba reported semiconductor revenue of \$10.4 billion.

Toshiba says MeP is the core of Toshiba's media-centric processors, and contains a 32-bit configurable, asymmetric multiprocessor design that can be customized to support diverse media applications, including products in the high-growth digital consumer market integrating video and audio functionality with target applications including digital consumer devices, automotive devices and mobile phone applications.

Also, Toshiba says it will leverage a version of the ARChitect processor configurator that has been customized to MeP to advance the development of its next-generation SoC based on MeP.

Yutaka Murao, senior fellow and general manager for the telecommunications and custom LSI business at Toshiba's semiconductor company said the company sees strong potential needs for configurability among customers in multiple media-oriented application arenas, and believe that Toshiba should provide customers with the most versatile platform. "Collaboration between the industry leaders in configurability will promote execution of this mission."

Murao explained that customers can engage the MeP through three business models: a traditional ASIC/ASSP model whereby Toshiba develops and fabs the devices; an IP license model, in which a customer would pay a license fee to use the MeP; or a web-based model that provides access to IP over the Internet.

Also present at the event was ARC's main EDA partner Cadence Design Systems, that is working with the processor supplier to integrate the ARChitect tool into certain Cadence design tools.

Jan Willis, senior VP of industry alliances for Cadence applauded the efforts made by ARC and Toshiba reminding that, "no one can do it alone."

Also during the press conference, Jim Feldhan, founder and president of Phoenix, Ariz.-based Semico Research Corp. said, "The Toshiba-ARC strategic collaboration is the latest indicator of how configurable processor technology is quickly broadening its appeal throughout the semiconductor industry. We project that by 2010 annual shipments of SoCs incorporating a configurable core will reach 1 billion units."

"The work of companies such as Toshiba and ARC is one of the catalysts driving this trend, as is the ability of configurable cores to enable a very high degree of differentiation in the end device. This is critical to keeping down the overall development cost of consumer products, which is an important success factor in today's price-sensitive markets," he added.

Finally, Carl Schlachte, president and CEO of ARC International concluded, "We are honored to have such a trusted relationship and confident of the impact this will have on the consumer electronics industry. This strategic collaboration underscores the increasing adoption of configurable technology by world leaders. By working together, Toshiba and ARC can help our customers be successful in meeting their business goals by using semiconductor products that are better suited to the requirements of tomorrow's markets."

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